

THE PLAY



IN THE PLAY: "Don't worry about me, Veta, I get along fine"—Frank Fay to Josephine Hull in "Harvey."

HARVEY, a comedy in three acts, by Mary Chase. Staged by Antoinette Perry; settings by John Root; produced by Brock Pemberton. At the Forty-eighth Street Theatre.
Myrtle Mae Simmons.....Jane Van Duser
Veta Louise Simmons.....Josephine Hull
Elwood P. Dowd.....Frank Fay
Miss Johnson.....Eloise Sheldon
Mrs. Ethel Chauvenet.....Frederica Goins
Ruth Kelly, R. N.....Janet Tyler
Marvin Wilson.....Jesse White
Lyman Sanderson, M. D.....Tom Seidel
William R. Chumley, M. D.....Fred Irving Lewis
Betty Chumley.....Dora Clement
Judge Omar Gaffney.....John Kirk
E. J. Lofgren.....Robert Gist

By LEWIS NICHOLS

If a rabbit, six feet one and one-half inches tall, sits down beside you at Charlie's, that will be Harvey, and you may count yourself fortunate. Harvey appears to those who are happy, and to those who have taken a drink now and then through the years and are the better for it. If Harvey does not visit Charlie's he can be found at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre, where Mary Chase's new play opened last evening with "Harvey" in quotation marks and giving a very delightful evening to the theatre. Brock Pemberton, who hitherto has held sternly apart from plays about rabbits, is the producer and Frank Fay and Josephine Hull are providing the last word in acting. Harvey, in or out of quotation, is one of the treats of the fall theatre.

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The story of "Harvey" is a little hard to explain, six-foot rabbits being unusual along Broadway by night. Elwood P. Dowd, an amiable man with a thirst for bar-rooms and people, met Harvey one day leaning against a wall, and they became friends. When Elwood began bringing Harvey home, Elwood's sister, who had respectable friends, decided it was time he had a rest. The difficulty was she had seen Harvey, too, and ultimately the psychiatrist meets up with him also—in Charlie's, of course. At

the end of the play in which the title-player never appears, the sister decides that Elwood had better keep Harvey around.

A fantasy such as "Harvey" can run into fearful trouble if it is badly done, but the only objection that can be raised against Mrs. Chase's play is that some scenes are a bit slow. The first act, in particular, is far too long. But when Mr. Fay is on the stage, quietly explaining his relationship with Harvey, the theatre could ask for little more. Mr. Fay does not act. He wanders amiably about the stage, never raises his voice, and when he wants to make a full gesture he lazily lifts a finger or two. Harvey obviously is behind him all the time—and perhaps all those years of the Palace and the night clubs, where actors grow accustomed to dealing with rabbits and legitimate parts.

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Josephine Hull also is no beginner on the stage, and her portrait of the woman who is trying to bring up her daughter in such a bizarre household is a masterpiece. She always is in trouble, always is misunderstood; when she takes her brother to the rest home, she herself is locked up there. Flighty and wide-eyed, Miss Hull is a perfect foil for Mr. Fay's casual ease. The rest of the cast back up the two principals, although the play is far from theirs. Janet Tyler is an attractive nurse in the rest home, Fred Irving Lewis a properly stocky psychiatrist, John Kirk the family attorney. Antoinette Perry has directed the play so that it runs easily, and John Root has designed the setting suitable for a home or rabbit hutch—whichever.

Harvey is worth knowing, either at Charlie's or on Forty-eighth Street.